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Mr. Welch, Meet Mr. Hoover

Robert Welch, the candymaker who founded the controversial John Birch Society, has completed a California speaking tour marked chiefly by his charge that the Protestant clergy contains 7,000 "comsymps"—his own new-speak term which he says means Communist or Communist sympathizer.

Mr. Welch has not, to our knowledge, identified any "comsymps" nor explained how he cindled all the 200,000 Protestant ministers so he could issue certificates of purity to all but 7,000.

His charge, in fact, sounds much like the generalization uttered by J. B. Matthews, the old Communist-hunter for Senator McCarthy, who stirred a national furore in 1953 by writing that Protestant clergymen were "the largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus." This similarity may be more than coincidence; Mr. Matthews is now associate editor of Mr. Welch's magazine, "American Opinion."

The Welch accusation against the Protestant clergy, however, is no more extreme than earlier charges against national leaders. He called former President Eisenhower "a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy"; said the late Secretary of State John Foster Dulles and his brother, Allen Dulles, chief of the Central Intelligence Agency, were Communist agents, and described former Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman as tools of Communism.

His statements suggest that Mr. Welch suffers the same tragic weakness



McCARTHY



MATTHEWS

which ultimately destroyed Senator McCarthy's usefulness: an obsession that anyone who differs with him on how to combat Communism must do so from treasonable motives.

To other self-mantled patriots of like mind we commend a reading of the statement by FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover, reprinted below. It is the wisest comment on the subject of fighting Communism we have read lately, and it comes from a man whose credentials as a relentless foe of Communists are unchallenged.

Or at least they were unchallenged. We don't know what Mr. Welch may have concluded about J. Edgar Hoover since reading the FBI chief's declaration that the practice of making reckless charges against other Americans does the Communists more good than harm.